



D-0220-046

## **Study on the feasibility of possible initiatives at EU level and establishment of a multi-stakeholder platform on quality of tourism accommodation services**

A study is being conducted for the European Commission (DG GROW) on the feasibility of possible initiatives at EU level and establishment of a multi-stakeholder platform on quality of tourism accommodation.

### **About the study and the consortium**

The scope of the project focuses, on one side, on the hotel star systems and, on the other side, on the online accommodation booking schemes and consumer review schemes. At this stage, the study will examine the existing tourism accommodation star systems across Member States to understand their differences and similarities.

The study is run by a consortium of two companies:

- The [VVA group](#) pilots the project. It will set out policy options on hotel categorization and undertake an impact assessment of these options.
- [Open Evidence](#) will conduct desk research and interviews.

It should be noted that the desk research will first and foremost focus on existing rules at national level on hotel classification. HOTREC has already pointed out that such an approach will only give a very partial overview of the situation in the EU as private initiatives, industry federations and the Hotel Stars Union in particular play a pivotal role in this area.

### **Expected outcome**

A clear expected outcome is the establishment of a multi-stakeholder platform on quality of tourism accommodation, bringing together experts, officials, industry associations, tourism boards, consumers and academics. It should be possible to ensure that HOTREC and HSU will be invited to be members of the stakeholder platform.

When it comes to further policy options, there is an opportunity to boost the visibility and outreach of the Hotel Stars Union on the one hand. On the other hand, the consultants already recognize that the prospect of moving towards EU rules aiming to harmonise hotel star classification in Europe is very unlikely.

### **Study milestones**

The following indicative timeline for the study has been established by the consultants at this stage:

- January 2020: scoping study and establishment of indicative timeframe

- February/March 2020: first round of interviews conducted by Open Evidence
- March/April 2020: 'consumer experiment' by Open Evidence: assessment of how consumers in various EU countries understand accommodation categories and user reviews, including when buying online.
- April 2020: launch of stakeholder platform with call for expression of interest
- June 2020: definition of policy options by VVA Group
- Over summer 2020: industry survey on the policy options with interviews and possible follow-up interviews
- Autumn 2020: Analysis of interviews and policy options
- 2021: stakeholder platform meetings
- End of 2021: contract ends

**Key action points at this stage:**

- HOTREC and HSU to take part in 1<sup>st</sup> round of interviews
- HOTREC to share contact details of national hotel associations with Open Evidence
- Ensure that HOTREC and HSU are participants in the multi-stakeholder platform
- Facilitate direct industry contacts for consultants during industry survey phase.

**Annex – Expert and stakeholders interview questionnaire by Open Evidence**



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry,  
Entrepreneurship and SMEs

Directorate F: Innovation and Advanced Manufacturing

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**EXPERT AND STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWS QUESTIONNAIRE**

## **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

*[Short introduction of the interviewer; name, position, company]*

We are about to start a short interview for a study we are conducting for the European Commission, concretely DG GROW, on the feasibility of possible initiatives at EU level and establishment of a multi-stakeholder platform on quality of tourism accommodation. The scope of the project focuses, on one side, on the hotel star systems and, on the other side, on the online accommodation booking schemes and consumer review schemes. At this stage, we are looking into the existing tourism accommodation star systems across Member States to understand their differences and similarities.

### **Topic 1: Star rating systems**

The objective of this part is to learn about star rating systems in (COUNTRY TO BE VALIDATED).

*[The interviewers will first present the findings of the research team summarised in the country fiche (which was previously shared with the interviewee), to be validated and elaborated by the interviewee.]*

1. Do you agree with the information summarised in the country fiche provided to you prior to this interview? Do you think that it provides a full and fair picture of the (COUNTRY TO BE VALIDATED) star-rating system? If not, how would you describe the star rating system in (COUNTRY TO BE VALIDATED)?
2. With regards to the data missing ....*[The interviewers will address all data gaps individually asking the interviewee if s/he is aware of how the system works and where the missing information is available (a source)]*
3. Who are the main players in the (COUNTRY TO BE VALIDATED) star rating system? (e.g. National authorities, regional authorities, hotel industry association)
4. Based on your experience, how would you describe the latest developments in the (COUNTRY TO BE VALIDATED) star rating system? Are there any clear trends? (e.g. there has been an increase in quality of hotel registered, businesses are less interested in the star-rating systems, etc.)
5. What are the main problems that have been identified with the current star rating system landscape in terms of consumers?
6. The hotel industry is characterised by a high number of cross-country transactions as many clients do not usually reside in the country where they are purchasing the accommodation service. Do you see any problem with the fact that different star rating systems are implemented the EU?

### **Topic 2: Consumer reviews and rating systems**

The objective of this part is to ask about the developments in consumer reviews and rating schemes of hotel booking websites and what has been the impact of those developments on the star-rating systems.

7. What do you think about the rise in consumer reviews and rating schemes of hotel booking websites? How do you think they impacted the star-rating system in your country?

### **Topic 3: Solution/Mediation/Regulation**

The objective of this part is to identify potential solutions or best practice with identified problems.

8. What new policy measures would you welcome in your country /across the EU? Is there a role here for (other) industry stakeholders?
9. Are you aware of any initiatives/best practices implemented in your country that could be relevant to our research?

## **EXPRESSION OF THANKS AND CLOSING OF INTERVIEW**

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*[Note: The Interviewer should provide his/her contact details in case the interviewee would like to add any other relevant information at a later stage.]*